

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ACTION  
26916

March 29, 1971

[REDACTED]  
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN... *AK*

SUBJECT: U. S. Communications Facilities in Morocco

Background

When the U.S. closed down its three Strategic Air Command bases in Morocco in 1963, King Hassan reached an oral agreement with President Kennedy during a state visit in the spring of that year which permitted the U.S. to stay on at its naval [REDACTED] communications facilities at Kenitra. The base was transferred to Moroccan control, and the US Navy established a communications training school for the Moroccan military there. Also, the training program for the F-5 aircraft which we sold to Morocco was located at that installation. In that same talk with President Kennedy, certain levels of economic and military assistance for the next couple of years were also mentioned.

The operation continued smoothly until last summer when there were leaks from the Symington sub-committee's hearings on U.S. installations abroad. Those newspaper stories were picked up in Morocco, and the opposition party and press made a good thing of the idea that the U.S. still had a "base" in Morocco. The Moroccan government handled the problem reasonably well, saying that this was not a U.S. base and that the main activity there was training Moroccans with some U.S. communications on the side.

Against the background of that political flurry, King Hassan last November said he wanted to discuss with you how he could show his people that the continuation of this relationship with the U.S. at Kenitra worked to their advantage. Robert Murphy was asked to talk with the King about this. His assessment was that the King did not wish to get rid of the U.S. installation but was angling for more aid in return for it. Apparently he

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- 2 -

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remembered the arrangement he had made directly with President Kennedy and had in mind capitalizing on his forthcoming state visit to get something more for the facility.

A complete intra-U.S. Government review has now taken place, and the Navy [REDACTED] concluded that it would be helpful if our facilities could remain in being as long as possible, although if popular political pressure in Morocco mounted, we would withdraw and duplicate their function as much as possible in Spain and elsewhere.

#### The Present Problem

The present problem, therefore, is to explain to King Hassan our requirements in relation to the Kenitra facilities and our general programming for military and economic assistance to Morocco. The purpose of the present exercise is to get as much of this settled before he comes on his state visit at the end of April, so that you will not have to do more than simply note that a satisfactory understanding has been reached. This cannot be guaranteed because the King has a notion that the way to do business on something like this is between heads of state. But as much will be done as possible to save you from anything more than a simple ratification of a general understanding.

The line of action which has been proposed through the NSC system is to instruct Ambassador Rockwell to go to the King and to make the following points in your name:

--The U.S. has appreciated its continued access to these facilities.

--The U.S. has not tied its assistance programs to Morocco to our continued access to the base. Our economic aid program (over \$660 million through 1969) has been based on our estimates not only of Moroccan economic requirements but also our general friendly relationship with Morocco.

--The President wishes the King to know that, subject to Congressional appropriations, the U.S. will continue to assist Morocco in the future because of our continued interest in Morocco's legitimate security and development needs.

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- 3 -

--With regard to Kenitra, at any time His Majesty concludes that our presence there poses unacceptable political liabilities to him we would understand and would be prepared to discuss with his government altering our presence as appropriate. In fact, some changes are already being made. We hope that the Moroccan government will find a way of conveying to the Moroccan people a full understanding of the substantial U.S. economic and military assistance the U.S. has provided. Morocco is the largest African recipient of U.S. economic and military assistance since World War II.

Ambassador Rockwell would also be authorized, at his discretion, to review with the King our plans for general economic and military assistance through FY 1972. This would include \$15 million in military credit in FY 1971 and again in FY 1972. This will require a Presidential determination that it is important to U.S. interests to provide this amount, but that has been included in your Budget. At the same time, the Navy will make improvements at the installation, which will benefit the Moroccans, which will total approximately \$14 million and will expand the telecommunications school for the Moroccan military.

The one issue in this approach is whether Ambassador Rockwell should be authorized to speak to the King about aid levels. The argument against doing so is that if the King were to raise the subject here when he comes, you would not have anything new to offer. However, it seems desirable to make some effort to give the King fully what we have in mind and then tell him, in the course of Ambassador Rockwell's presentation, that you hope this subject can be laid aside so that other matters of common concern may be discussed during the King's visit.

#### Summary

In short, this is a holding action. We do not believe that the King really wants us to leave. He wants a continuing association with the U.S. He also wants as much military and economic assistance as he can get from us. The amount that has been offered is as much as we can do within the scope of our appropriations and what the Moroccans can use.

RECOMMENDATION: That the above approach be authorized.

Approve                     

Disapprove